

## Message Text

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16

ACTION EA-10

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 CIAE-00 DODE-00 NSAE-00 NSCE-00 SSO-00

USIE-00 INRE-00 OMB-01 AID-05 IO-10 PM-03 H-02 INR-07

L-02 NSC-05 PA-01 PRS-01 SP-02 SS-15 ACDA-05 /070 W

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O 081014Z MAY 75

FM AMEMBASSY SEOUL

TO SECSTATE WASHDC IMMEDIATE 9942

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EO 11652: N/A

TAGS: PFOR, MARR, KS

SUBJ: ROK PRESS REPORTS CHONG'S WASHINGTON VISIT REASSURING --  
APPARENTLY EVEN TO PRESIDENT PARK

REF SEOUL 3216

1. ROK PRESS CONTINUES TO ACCORD MAJOR COVERAGE TO WASHINGTON VISIT OF SPEAKER CHONG IL-KWON (REFTEL) AND ASSURANCES HE HAS BEEN RECEIVING OF US SUPPORT FOR KOREA. PRESS MAY 8 REPORTED HIS MEETINGS WITH VICE PRESIDENT AND CONGRESSIONAL LEADERS AND HIS SCHEDULED CALL ON PRESIDENT FORD AND LUNCH WITH CONGRESSMAN FRASER.

2. ACCORDING TO KOREAN DISPATCHES FROM WASHINGTON, SPEAKER ALBERT TOLD CHONG IN MAY 6 MEETING THAT ONLY STATIONING OF US FORCES IN ROK WOULD PREVENT NEW AGGRESSION BY NORTH KOREA PROBABLY SUPPORTED BY SOVIET UNION AND CHINA. US SPEAKER ALSO REPORTEDLY EMPHASIZED NEED FOR STRENGTHENING TIES BETWEEN US AND ROK, AND SAID THAT CONGRESS WOULD DO ITS BEST TO HELP ADMINISTRATION LIVE UP TO ITS COMMITMENT TO ROK.

3. PRESS ALSO REPORTED THAT VICE PRESIDENT ROCKEFELLER MAY 7 TOLD CHONG THAT ANY REDUCTION OF US FORCES IN  
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ROK OR CHANGE IN THEIR STATUS WOULD ADVERSELY AFFECT

THE SECURITY OF THE KOREAN PENINSULA. VICE PRESIDENT REPORTEDLY SAID THAT AFTER FALL OF INDOCHINA THERE IS GROWING DETERMINATION IN US TO CHECK ANY AGGRESSION, AND THAT OVERWHELMING MAJORITY IN CONGRESS FEEL US COMMITMENT TO ROK SHOULD BE OBSERVED. HOWEVER, PRESS ALSO NOTED THAT HE HAD EMPHASIZED MUTUAL NEED FOR MAKING EFFORTS TO PROMOTE UNDERSTANDING OF THOSE IN US WHO ARE CRITICAL OF ROK.

4. REPORT OF CHONG'S SCHEDULED CALL ON PRESIDENT WAS ACCOMPANIED BY STORY THAT NESSEN HAD GIVEN PRESS BACKGROUND ON PRESIDENT'S REMARKS ON ROK (REFTEL), SAYING THAT PRESIDENT WANTED TO EMPHASIZE FIRMNESS OF US COMMITMENT AND ALSO LET NORTH KOREA KNOW US INTENTION TO COUNTER FIRMLY ANY ATTEMPT TO CREATE TENSION ON KOREAN PENINSULA. PRESS ALSO REPORTED MAY 6 NEW YORK TIMES STORY THAT CONGRESSIONAL PROPONENTS OF REDUCING US FORCES IN ROK HAD GIVEN UP EFFORTS FOR TIME BEING. PRESS NOTED THAT CHONG HAD TALKED WITH SENATOR MANSFIELD AND CONGRESSMAN O'NEILL, WHO WERE AMONG THOSE NAMED IN TIMES ARTICLE.

5. IN MIDST OF STORIES FROM WASHINGTON REPORTING RENEWED US ASSURANCES ON SUPPORT FOR ROK, PRESS MAY 8 GAVE MAJOR ATTENTION TO STATEMENT BY PRESIDENT PAK THAT THERE IS NO REASON TO DOUBT THE US DEFENSE COMMITMENT "REPEATEDLY RECONFIRMED BY OUR ALLY." PRESIDENT WAS TALKING TO JOINT MEETING OF ROKG AND RULING PARTY OFFICIALS AT BLUE HOUSE AND MADE REMARKS IN CONTEXT OF NEED FOR HEIGHTENED ROK SECURITY IN FACE OF INCREASED NORTH KOREAN THREAT. HE SAID THAT DANGER OF NORTH KOREAN MISCALCULATION HAD RISEN FOLLOWING INDOCHINA DEFEAT BUT EXPRESSED CONFIDENCE THAT "THE PREPAREDNESS OF OUR AND THE US ARMED FORCES IS PERFECT AND THEREFORE WE CAN CRUSH ANY RASH COMMUNIST NORTH KOREAN ATTACK."

6. PRESS EMPHASIS ON POSITIVE TREATMENT OF US REASSURANCES TO KOREA WAS FURTHER REFLECTED IN EDITORIAL REACTION TO PRESIDENT FORD'S PRESS CONFERENCE  
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REMARKS, WHICH VIRTUALLY ALL SEOUL PAPERS FOUND ENCOURAGING. OFFICIAL SEOUL SHINMUN ECHOED PAK IN DECLARING "WE ARE NOT SKEPTICAL ABOUT US COMMITMENT SINCE IT WAS REAFFIRMED REPEATEDLY BY USG LEADERS." EDITORIALS SAW PRESIDENT FORD'S REAFFIRMATION OF US ATTITUDE AS "NATURAL" BUT NONETHELESS CONVEYED FEELING OF RELIEF AND SOME LESSENING OF ANXIETY FELT SINCE FALL OF INDOCHINA.

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